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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7785th meeting

Saturday, 8 October 2016, 2.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Ayrault
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 2.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them documents S/2016/846 and S/2016/847, which contain the texts of two draft resolutions, respectively.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Ayrault (France) (*spoke in French*): Faced with the unbearable horror of Aleppo's martyrdom, the Security Council must again assume the responsibility entrusted to it by the international community to guarantee peace, ensure security and protect civilians.

We heard yesterday from Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Staffan de Mistura. His description resounded like a warning cry. If this situation continues, by the end of the year we will bear witness to the destruction of Aleppo. The message Staffan de Mistura addressed to the Security Council is unambiguous. If we do not act, the city will soon be no more than a field of ruins and will go down in history as a place whose inhabitants were abandoned to their executioners.

Fifteen days ago in this Chamber, on behalf of France I called for an immediate ceasefire (see S/PV.7774). Since then, following a stillborn agreement, the Syrian regime has confirmed its objective with breathtaking brutality — and it has nothing to do with the fight against terrorism. Its objective is the capitulation of Aleppo. Daraya, Hama, Aleppo — with each, the tactics of the Syrian regime have been the same: indiscriminate bombing and the methodical destruction of civilian infrastructure to inflict maximum suffering on the population. Most recently, this has included eliminating the supply of drinking water in Aleppo and the systematic targeting of hospitals and health personnel. Each time, those who back Damascus provide decisive support for a strategy that seeks exclusively to secure the surrender of fighters and the exodus of civilians through operations that involve a cycle of potentially devastating ethnic cleansing.

How can we collectively tolerate this? The Secretary-General has spoken of war crimes. We all recall Guernica, Srebrenica and Grozny. What is happening before our eyes in Aleppo is the sinister repetition of those tragedies. If it does not pull itself together, the international community will share the responsibility for these events.

The regime and its supporters claim to act on behalf of the fight against terrorism. I denounce that fraudulent claim with great force. Bashar Al-Assad does not fight terrorism; he feeds it. Since the beginning of the conflict, he has targeted the moderate opposition above all because it embodies the only hope for the eventual restoration of a united and peaceful Syria. He has organized a lethal understanding between himself and Da'esh and Al-Qaida, groups with which he has shared goals and which he deliberately spares.

France has paid the price of terrorism. It cannot allow this critical fight, which should bring us all together, to be derailed by punitive actions that ultimately only strengthen those it claims to wish to eliminate. Destroying hospitals, starving civilians, massacring women and children, and besieging cities as in the Middle Ages merely fuels radicalization and terrorism. We must therefore halt this vicious cycle on an urgent basis. Today, faced with this horror, the Security Council must make a simple and obvious decision. It must demand immediate action to save Aleppo, an end to all bombing by the regime and its allies, and the unhindered and unconditional delivery of humanitarian assistance to a population that desperately requires it. That is what the situation in Aleppo calls for.

And that is what France, alongside most members of the Council, has promoted tirelessly. A week ago, alongside Spain, we submitted a simple draft resolution in response to this emergency. What does it say? It reaffirms the obvious unacceptability of the

indiscriminate repression by the Syrian regime of its own people. It recalls all the decisions taken by our Council since the onset of the crisis. It sets out the conditions for a just and lasting peace — a political solution whose outline we defined long ago. Finally, it expresses a desire for unity around the goal that brings us together — the fight against terrorism.

The draft resolution also makes clear and precise demands, including an immediate halt to the bombing and military flights over Aleppo; humanitarian access; respect for the truce, guaranteed by an effective verification mechanism whose modalities are open; the withdrawal of all forms of support or collaboration with terrorist groups designated by the Security Council; and the resumption of the political process.

Some would impose conditions on the halt to the bombing, including the precise identification of the whereabouts of terrorist groups and their separation. That is a sham because it is unachievable so long as the bombing continues. That much is obvious. Moreover, smashing a city with bombs and massacring civilians is tantamount to doing the terrorists' work for them, not fighting them. I reiterate that the genuine emergency is an end to the bombing, which is the only valid precondition because it determines everything else.

We patiently negotiated the draft resolution in good faith and with the desire to unite the international community around a single goal. The legitimate concerns raised by some have been taken into account, and it is with an open heart and extended hand that I have personally striven in recent days and hours to create the conditions for consensus, in all sincerity and without ulterior motives, driven by the sole desire to promote the return of peace in Syria, to end the martyrdom of a people and to promote a solution to the plight of millions of refugees and displaced persons. I feel that the broad majority of Council members understand and approve of this approach.

The adoption of the draft resolution could restore to the inhabitants of Aleppo, the Syrian people and the rest of us a glimmer of hope for an end to the spiral of violence and for a new political dynamic based on the immediate resumption of negotiations for a transition, the outlines of which were unanimously defined by the Security Council a little less than a year ago.

If instead our draft is rejected, despite enjoying broad support, what will we have left? There will be more death, more refugees, and more displaced. But we must neither reject it nor give up. Each of us will have to imagine the consequences and take the serious and necessary decisions to ensure that the perpetrators of war crimes do not go unpunished, that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons are identified and punished, and that those who abet an exhausted regime shoulder the consequences. All those who refuse to give up must come together and act.

In 2011, a people rose up peacefully against oppression. For five years, despite savage repression, that people has not given up. Let us not leave that sorely tested and suffering people to choose between an inhumane executioner or the abject terrorism of Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front. I call on every member of the Council to assume its responsibilities to save the population of Aleppo, come together for peace and send the Syrian regime the message it should have heard long ago.

What is at stake today is, first of all, the fate of Aleppo and its population, but it is also above all the hope of finally ending a conflict of whose catastrophic costs we must all pay the price. Faced with such dire stakes, to hinder the adoption of the draft resolution before us today would be to allow Bashar Al-Assad to keep on killing. It would above all be offering a senseless gift to the terrorists. My dearest wish is that the Council does not offer such a gift.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Along with France, Spain has supported this draft resolution (S/2016/846) on Aleppo in order to try to respond to a desperate situation. During more than five years of a heart-breaking conflict in Syria, we have seen indiscriminate attacks against civilians. We have seen both parties destroy hospitals, schools and even humanitarian convoys. We have seen with alarm the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian army. In spite of that, we are here today because the worst phase of the war in Syria could still lie ahead. The offensive by President Al-Assad against eastern Aleppo is a tragedy against which the international community cannot turn its back.

As the French Minister for Foreign Affairs has correctly said, this draft resolution seeks to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe. We therefore demand an immediate halt to aerial attacks, which are terrorizing the 275,000 civilians trapped in the eastern part of the city. The main goal of the draft resolution is to save from disaster an ancient city at risk of being levelled

to the ground by the brutality of a fratricidal war. Spain's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. José Manuel García Margallo, clearly expressed our view here in the Security Council when the increase in clashes began in late September (see S/PV.7774). He identified three essential steps on which we must focus our efforts.

The first was to ensure that a ceasefire takes effect; the second was to ensure humanitarian access; and the third was to create the necessary conditions to relaunch United Nations mediation. The draft resolution in effect calls for the immediate observance of a ceasefire throughout the entire country. We also aim to improve the monitoring mechanism, which has not worked as desired in recent months. We call on the Security Council — for the first time since the war in Syria began — to send a clear message to the parties to isolate the terrorist groups in Syria, who are posing a threat to the entire international community.

Secondly, we aim to ensure once and for all that humanitarian access is in the hands of the professionals of the United Nations and of the Red Crescent. It is intolerable that the Syrian Government continues to block assistance to its own population, using fictitious bureaucratic hurdles and deliberate tactics, such as removing medical materials, which amount to war crimes. The draft resolution therefore establishes that it ought to be the United Nations that determines the number of beneficiaries and the needs of almost 900,000 civilians in Syria. We also call for an investigation into the attack on the United Nations-Red Crescent convoy at Urum Al-Kubra on 19 September. We will not rest until we have done everything possible to ensure that those responsible are held accountable before justice. We hope that, wherever they may, they will listen clearly to this message today on the part of all members of the Security Council.

Lastly, the draft resolution calls for a return to the path of dialogue as soon as possible, while also expressing our full support for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

France and Spain have done everything within their power to garner the support of the 15 members of the Security Council. This has been a sincere effort to incorporate the various points of view, while always respecting the main purpose of the draft resolution — nothing less than avoiding catastrophe in Aleppo and slowing the escalation of violence. We note that we are near to achieving consensus. We still hope that the countries seated around this table will allow the adoption of this draft resolution. We still have time to make the right decision.

Lastly, Spain would like to express its gratitude to the many States Members of the United Nations that are sponsoring this draft resolution. We interpret that support as a message that the Security Council should fulfil the responsibility entrusted to it by the Charter. From the seat we occupy here as a non-permanent member of this organ, we will work tirelessly to ensure that is the case.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

Today we are participants in one of the strangest scenarios in the history of the Security Council. We are about to vote on two draft resolutions (S/2016/846 and S/2016/847), and we are all perfectly aware that neither of them will be adopted. Considering that the crisis in Syria is going through an agonizing stage that demands the greatest possible political cooperation on the part of the international community, such a waste of time is unacceptable.

We all know the background to the Syrian crisis. After destroying Libya and considering that a great success, the troika of the three Western permanent members of the Security Council turned on Syria. And this time, most unfortunately, Paris — which in 2003 joined with Moscow and other clear-thinking capitals in an effort to deter the United States and United Kingdom from an opportunistic invasion of Iraq — has become one of the loudest promoters of an ill-conceived policy of regime change in Damascus.

It grieves us to point out that in all the years of the Syrian crisis, the French delegation in the Security Council has never once made any constructive proposals, with its rare initiatives clearly calculated for propaganda effect and doomed to failure. And that is what happened this time. Our French colleagues approached us about a week ago, informing us that they wanted us to support a draft resolution on Syria, and emphasizing that Paris did not want a Russian veto. On 6 October, those assurances about the desire to avoid a Russian veto were confirmed at a higher level. But 24 hours later, after only one round of serious consultations, a draft resolution, doomed to receive the Russian veto that we had repeatedly and justifiably discussed, was put in blue and submitted for a vote.

We should point out that Spain — which was specifically invited to be a member of the International Syria Support Group by Russia — has continually reminded us of its co-authorship of the draft resolution. The Spanish diplomatic efforts are disappointing. In particular, the French-Spanish draft resolution features a ban on all military flights over Aleppo, and not only over the eastern part of the city but also the west, which has been continually under fire from fighters from the eastern side. In September alone, according to United Nations data, more than 80 civilians were killed and 170 wounded. Moreover, the concept of banning all military flights has not been thought through at all. To the question of whether that also meant a ban on the reconnaissance drones tracking fighters' movements, there was no answer. To the question of why it also applies to the western part of the city, which the Government controls, the anwer was that it was more convenient. Is that what you call a serious discussion?

Another main point is that there has never been an instance in the entire history of the Security Council when a permanent member was allowed to adopt a resolution that directly or indirectly predetermined its course of action without prior discussion of the matter. I do not think we will see any such cases in future — unless France, having renounced the right of veto, is then controlled by a majority of Security Council members. Whatever the restrictions, they can be considered only in the context of compliance with the ceasefire, which terrorists and other illegal armed groups are routinely violating. Another basic flaw in the French-Spanish draft resolution is that instead of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) monitoring mechanism provided for in resolution 2268 (2016), it proposes a duplicative plan pulled out of thin air. We regard this as an attempt to do away with the existing collaborative architecture.

In the circumstances, yesterday afternoon we took the unusual step of drafting a resolution intended to demonstrate that a reasonable course of collective action does exist whereby we can build on all the positive things that we previously worked out so painstakingly. Our draft includes a provision relating to the still-relevant parameters of the Russian-American agreement of 9 September, emphasizing the importance of ensuring immediate and unhindered humanitarian access, specifically via weekly 48-hour humanitarian pauses. The text of the document is annexed to the draft resolution.

The draft resolution includes a provision on the importance of ensuring that the ceasefire is adhered to by every side in Aleppo and affirms the existing monitoring arrangement involving the ISSG ceasefire task force. It establishes the fundamental priority of distinguishing the moderate opposition from Jabhat Al-Nusra and urges ISSG members to require all parties to cease conducting joint combat operations with terrorists and to separate from them and officially adhere to the cessation of hostilities. It points out that in order to make progress with humanitarian efforts, the fighters should stop blocking traffic on the Castello road, in accordance with the 9 September agreement.

The draft resolution welcomes Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura's initiative of 6 October aimed at normalizing the situation in Aleppo. It requests that the Secretary-General submit a detailed plan for its implementation for the Security Council's approval. Incidentally, in another of its major shortcomings, the French-Spanish draft resolution completely ignores Mr. de Mistura's initiative. Our draft resolution emphasizes how crucial it is to achieve full, unconditional compliance with resolution 2254 (2015) on every front — political, humanitarian and counter-terrorism. We continue to believe that we should work to make progress in all those directions simultaneously, with no attempts at mutual coordination or preconditions. The inter-Syrian political process, which the radical opposition, with the direct connivance of its foreign sponsors, has been blocking since May, must be relaunched as soon as possible.

We realize that our draft resolution will not get enough votes today. Some will be guided by anti-Russian sentiments, others by false notions of prestige, and some will simply not have the courage. Russia will nonetheless continue to work to achieve a settlement in Syria with all interested international and regional stakeholders. The amount of fighting overall in eastern Aleppo has been falling. Yesterday, for example, almost no combat missions were flown. We hope that trend will continue.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I shall first put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2016/846, submitted by Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia,

Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

Against:

Russian Federation and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Abstaining:

Angola and China

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There were 11 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make a statement after the voting.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I normally begin my statements in the Council with the words "Thank you, Mr. President". I cannot do that today, because today we have seen the fifth veto of a vote on Syria in five years from you, Mr. President — a veto that has once again stopped the Council from creating the unity needed to give the people of Syria any hope of respite from their suffering; a veto that has once again denigrated the credibility of the Security Council and respect for it in the eyes of the world; a veto that is a cynical abuse of the privileges and responsibilities of permanent membership. I simply cannot thank you for it. Nor can the thousands on thousands of innocent men, women and children trapped in Aleppo. Tonight they will endure another night of fear and pain, and another night of wondering whether they will live to see the morning. One hundred thousand of them are children.

The current tactics being used in Aleppo under the alibi of countering terrorism are turning a humanitarian crisis into a catastrophe, and your veto today, Mr. President, has only confirmed what we have known for a long time. Russia's actions in recent weeks have exposed just how hollow its commitment to the political process is. Today we have seen that commitment for what it really is — a sham. Instead of investing energy in peace and diplomacy, Russia has supported, facilitated and cooperated with the Syrian regime in order to retake and destroy areas standing against Al-Assad, literally killing off those who want a moderate, peaceful and pluralistic future, free from both the barbarism of Al-Assad and the horrors inflicted by Da'esh and other terrorists in Syria. And it is Syrian civilians who continue to bear the brunt of that cruelty and Russia's complicity. Civilians, medics, White Helmets are under direct attack from barrel bombs, cluster munitions and incendiary weapons, and that is even before we mention the continued barbaric use of chemical weapons by the regime.

I echo the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who described the destruction of Aleppo as the absolute contempt for the human spirit and for the dignity of the human being. The Security Council cannot stand by while such misery is meted out on the people of Aleppo, and yet, thanks to you, Mr. President, that is exactly what we are doing.

This text that you vetoed, Sir, was not unreasonable. It called for sensible, overdue steps that would have saved lives, starting with the complete end of the bombardment of Aleppo. There can be no military justification for aerial attacks that indiscriminately hit civilians and their homes and their hospitals. The text called for full and unhindered humanitarian access. It is despicable that the regime continues to refuse access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas. It is despicable that the violence is so extreme that the safety even of humanitarian convoys cannot be assured, as seen through the strike on a United Nations aid convoy last month, for which the evidence is clear that Russia was responsible.

Further, this text called for the full implementation of resolution 2268 (2016) and the resumption of the cessation of hostilities. We see every day in Aleppo that there simply can be no military victory in this conflict. There can only be losers. We also see every day that obligation after obligation, set by resolution after resolution of the Security Council, are being flouted. We need Council unity to end this war, and that unity will only come when Russia changes its policy and stops the aerial bombardment.

This has been a strong week for Council unity, and yet we have ended on sadly familiar ground. We, the whole Council, stood with you, Mr. President, on Wednesday, as you announced the next Secretary-General. Thanks to your actions today, Sir, António Guterres' job will be even harder. And worse still, thanks to your actions today, Syrians will continue to lose their lives in Aleppo and beyond to Russian and Syrian bombing. Please stop now.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I wish first to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marc Ayrault, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, and thank him for introducing the draft resolution contained in document S/2016/846, co-authored by France and Spain. We also note the draft resolution contained in document S/2016/847, submitted by the Russian Federation, on which the Council will take action later.

Malaysia has repeatedly called for the Security Council to act more decisively on Syria. We view this latest effort by France and Spain as an attempt to assert the Council's authority and discharge its responsibility to effectively address the deteriorating situation in Syria. We believe that the main objective of the draft resolution contained in document S/2016/846 was to prevent further escalation of violence and hostilities, including by calling for a halt to aerial bombardment, is key to reducing the death and destruction that have disproportionately affected thousands of Syrian civilians, particularly women and children, for far too long.

Cessation of aerial bombardment would have been a very welcome and necessary step in elevating the despicable suffering of those civilians in eastern Aleppo who have borne the brunt of such bombardment in recent weeks. Of utmost importance to my delegation is the understanding that, had this draft resolution been adopted, all parties to the conflict with the capacity to carry out air strikes would have to heed the provisions of paragraph 3 of the Franco-Spanish text. Given its clarity of purpose and the compelling reasons behind it, my delegation voted in favour of the Franco-Spanish draft. We are gravely disappointed that the draft resolution was voted down. It is shameful and a betrayal of all the hopes pinned upon the Security Council to alleviate the dreadful suffering caused by a brutal conflict.

Briefly, on the draft resolution contained in document S/2016/847, there is no question that the draft has some merit and contains elements that also speak to alleviating the humanitarian situation, on restarting the political process in Syria and on combating terrorism. That notwithstanding, Malaysia and other members of the Council are not privy to the 9 September bilateral agreement between Russia and the United States. Since the United States has publicly repudiated the agreement on account of lack of implementation, we do not believe that the Council is in a position to endorse such an agreement. We are therefore not in a position to support this draft.

We are fearful of the consequences of the Council's actions, particular on the message of Council disunity that we have displayed today. The Security Council cannot afford to continue in this state of paralysis, with total disregard for the abysmal situations faced by innocent civilians in Syria. With such deep disunity, how much hope and prayers can those besieged Syrians in such appalling situations pin on us?

In our view, these initiatives today do not represent the Council's best efforts. The responsibility of addressing the conflict in Syria remains squarely on our shoulders. In this regard, a number of us could perhaps coalesce around a middle ground with the hope of finding a way out of the current stalemate and move closer to a common understanding on ending hostilities and conflict. We will certainly work to this end alongside interested Council members and other partners. We must never give up hope. We must not let eastern Aleppo end tragically.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): Yesterday we met in the consultations room and listened to United Nations Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura describe the daily deadly indiscriminate bombings raining down on eastern Aleppo. We heard Special Envoy de Mistura implore the Security Council to take urgent action to avert a large-scale massacre, noting that failure on our part would be a tragedy and a stain on the Security Council that lingers like others in recent history.

The draft resolution contained in document S/2016/846, vetoed by Russia today, had a simple demand and one goal: stop the bombing in Aleppo City. Over the last two weeks, Russia and the Al-Assad regime have launched a terrifying military offensive in eastern Aleppo that has laid waste to an area of the city with 275,000 civilians trapped inside of it. Air strikes from this Russian and Syrian regime offensive

have systematically eliminated whatever infrastructure was left to support the people of eastern Aleppo. Hospitals have been bombed. Pumps for drinking water have been bombed. Ambulances and fire trucks for first responders have been bombed. Families have been trapped under the rubble. Hundreds of civilians are dead, and hundreds of thousands of civilians are literally at risk of starving to death if nothing changes.

The Secretary-General has described Aleppo as worse than a slaughterhouse. The United Nations Special Envoy has warned the city will be completely destroyed by the end of the year. And we know the cause — the air strikes conducted by Russia and the Al-Assad regime are the cause. Russia and Al-Assad want to seize eastern Aleppo to further bolster the regime in Damascus. Russia could not let this draft resolution stand in their way, so they vetoed it. Russia dropped its veto here in the Security Council to strengthen Bashar Al-Assad at the expense of 275,000 Syrians. We have heard so many warnings in this Chamber, so many words of anguish offered, so many descriptions of the barbarism that is unfolding. Simply put, today was time for the Council to act, to learn the lessons of the recent past. We failed to do that because one of us — perversely, the President of the Security Council — is intent on allowing the killing to continue and, indeed, participating in carrying it out. It is grotesque.

Russia, as always, will offer a different narrative. Russia has said that it is fighting terrorism. They will probably somehow blame the United States of America for the suffering in Aleppo; they will suggest that we are the ones not serious about the fight against terrorism; they will invoke past conflicts in distant lands; and they will lie. In short, they will do anything and everything to deny and deflect from the truth.

The truth is that Russia is using counter-terrorism as an excuse to help the Al-Assad regime re-take control of Aleppo by brutal force, snuff out whatever opposition groups dare to resist the Al-Assad regime's brutality, and cow civilians who yearn for a different government into submission. As Secretary of State John Kerry has said,

> "this is a targeted strategy to terrorize civilians and kill anybody and everybody who is in the way of their military objectives".

There is no other plausible explanation. Why else would the first targets in the Syrian/Russian offensive be hospitals and the bases for first responders, which should have been protected? Why else would each hospital in eastern Aleppo have been struck not once, but at least twice? Why else would a convoy of life-saving humanitarian aid bound for Aleppo be destroyed?

One does not have to be an international legal scholar to know that there is a term that may well describe these actions: war crimes, and they must be investigated. Russia cannot use the presence of what the United Nations estimates to be a couple hundred members of Al-Nusra to justify an indiscriminate aerial bombing campaign devastating an entire population of hundreds of thousands of civilians currently trapped by Russia and the regime.

Russia has the privilege of serving as a permanent member of the Security Council, with a responsibility to maintain international peace and security. But through the campaign it describes as counter-terrorism, Russia has become one of the chief purveyors of terror in Aleppo, using tactics more commonly associated with thugs than Governments. Russia and the Al-Assad regime think the world will look the other way if they recite the word "counter-terrorism". That is wrong, and each and every one of us must make that clear to Russia.

There are terrorists in Syria — a lot of them. The United States does not need anyone to explain why terrorists are serious, deadly and dangerous. That there are terrorists in Syria is the reason the United States leads a 67-member coalition in the region to fight them. It is why the United States remains unambiguous in our call for opposition groups to separate themselves from Al-Nusra. It is why this week the United States conducted an air strike that targeted a senior Al-Nusra leader in Idlib, Syria.

The United States will be relentless in our fight against terrorism. We spent months looking for a way to work with Russia on a campaign that would have effectively targeted Al-Nusra. We agreed on a way forward that would have allowed us to focus on terrorist targets. In return, we asked that Russia show a good faith commitment by upholding a cessation of hostilities and allowing for humanitarian aid. When presented with this opportunity to cooperate on counter-terrorism, Russia decided to walk away. Russia decided to ignore the Council's repeated calls to implement the cessation of hostilities. Russia decided that it would support the Al-Assad regime's military campaign to "re-take every inch of Syria", to use Al-Assad's own words.

Some here today will criticize this draft resolution for lacking balance, but there is no balance in the bombardment of eastern Aleppo. It is simple. Russia and the Al-Assad regime launched the deadliest campaign of aerial bombardment since 2011. Russia and the Al-Assad regime are using incendiary weapons and bunker-buster bombs, which are magnifying human suffering, hitting even doctors trying to treat patients in basement emergency rooms because nowhere else was safe. Russia and the Syrian regime are causing this bloody chaos. So we must demand that the ones responsible for this air campaign stop. This is not how you defeat terrorists; it is how you create them.

In this conflict, violence begets violence. Our effort today was to stop bombardments over Aleppo, nothing more. It is a deadly shame that we were unable to do so. The United States remains committed to finding ways to de-escalate this violence, put a ceasefire in place and start a genuine political process. But for that to happen, there must be an end to the horrific suffering of the people of eastern Aleppo, caused by the current President of the Security Council's and Syrian aircraft. It is time for Russia to stop starving and killing Aleppo's children.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): The situation in Aleppo is devastating, as Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura made very clear to us yesterday. He warned us that we are facing a situation not dissimilar to those in Rwanda and Srebrenica, atrocities the Council signally failed to prevent. We must learn our lessons; we must stop the destruction of the entire city of eastern Aleppo.

Terrorism is a scourge to the world, but it is not acceptable that Russia and Syria use counter-terrorism as a pretext for a large-scale bombing campaign for which civilians are paying the greatest price. Whatever the sins of the hundreds or thousand plus terrorists in eastern Aleppo, that cannot justify the prolonged bombardment of 275,000 civilians.

We had hoped that the Council would have been able to come together on a text that all parties could accept and that could stand a chance of contributing to practical and constructive action on the ground. The failure of today's draft resolution, contained in document S/2016/846, contributes to the polarized dynamic on Syria among the major Powers and undermines the credibility of the Security Council.

Given the recent breakdown of the cessation of hostilities and the curtailing of diplomatic efforts by the United States and Russia, it is vital to use all multilateral channels, particularly the Council, to move the parties away from the killing and back towards the negotiating table and, in the meantime, to spare the Syrian people and allow them the humanitarian assistance they so desperately need.

The Council has a special responsibility. We will continue to talk with other Council members to explore what action might be possible in the coming days.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): We know that New Zealand attempted to develop a draft resolution that would have been a happy medium between the two approaches before us today, and we regret that some influential members of the Council did not allow that draft to go forward.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Ukraine co-sponsored and voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document S/2016/846. We commend the hard work carried out by the French and Spanish delegations in drafting and negotiating it.

We are extremely dismayed, but not surprised, by the fact that all these efforts were, in the end, derailed by the veto power of Russia. This is the fifth veto exercised by Russia with respect to draft resolutions concerning Syria over the past years. Had the draft resolution seen the light and been adopted, it would have been a real meaningful step by the Council towards exercising preventive diplomacy. It would have helped to prevent what is about to become one of the gravest humanitarian tragedies of our times. History will hold accountable those who did not let the Council discharge its duties. Bearing in mind the clear humanitarian character of the draft resolution aimed at stopping the razing of eastern Aleppo by the end of the year, we acted fully in line with the code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, which Ukraine joined last year.

We are extremely disappointed that the political statement on the suspension of the veto in the case of mass atrocities, an initiative designed to curb the use of veto by the permanent members of the Council, has yet to gain traction. Here again, the Russian Federation is more interested in safeguarding its privileges than in fulfilling its responsibilities before the international community. For Ukraine, that is nothing new; we have seen Russia exercise its veto quite recently, in March 2014 and July 2015. In those cases, the Council's action would have saved thousands of human lives and sent

a powerful messages to perpetrators of heinous acts against civilians, and their crimes would not have gone unpunished.

What we see today has a meaning — Russia's policies remain unchanged. If the current dynamics of the Syrian conflict continue and the logic of war prevails over the voices of peace, we, as the international community, face a real risk of a protracted deadly conflict lasting many more years. The repercussions for such a scenario are a Pandora's box that is easy to open but nearly impossible to close — more refugees flowing to Europe and other places, more destabilization in neighbouring countries, a rising death toll and a deepening humanitarian crisis. If Russia is not waging hybrid warfare to reassert itself in the world at any price, then black is white and white is black.

Those who oppose peace and prolong war risk setting the wider region ablaze in a fire of sectarian war and radicalization, giving more space for the extremist to exploit. Finally, I want to echo the words of Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, that we do not want to live through another Srebrenica or Rwanda. To that, I would add that we also do not want to live through another Grozny.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The situation in Syria is intolerable. Against the backdrop of exploding bombs, meeting after meeting, negotiation after negotiation, resolution after resolution, human beings are annihilated. Homes, markets, schools, health facilities are all reduced to rubble, in violation of all the rules of international humanitarian law. I echo the sentiments of my President, Mr. Macky Sall, who expressed them here on 21 September under the presidency of New Zealand (see S/PV.7774). By deciding to vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by France and Spain, Senegal echoed the heartfelt appeal of the Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, for the Council to act urgently to avoid eastern Aleppo from becoming an unprecedented tragedy.

Senegal had hoped that the time had come for the Council, as guarantor of international peace and security, to shoulder its responsibilities to reestablish a ceasefire, not only in eastern Aleppo, but also across Syria. Unfortunately the draft resolution proposed by France and Spain was unsuccessful. Mr. De Mistura had warned us about the risk of Aleppo being completely destroyed in two months with thousands dead and wounded if air strikes were to be deployed.

My delegation takes this opportunity to once again urge the International Syria Support Group, in particular its two co-chairs, to do whatever it takes to reach an effective and lasting truce across Syria in order to allow unfettered and unconditional humanitarian assistance and the resumption of a credible process, under the aegis of the United Nations, on the basis of the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/523, annex) and resolution 2254 (2015).

If we do not rally around the objectives of peace and stability in Syria, we will run the risk of strengthening terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Jabhat Fath al-Sham and the former Jabhat al-Nusrah, who are our common enemies that must be fought in the framework of a shared comprehensive strategy.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): Japan supported the French and Spanish proposal, because among other things, it demands that all parties immediately end all aerial bombardments of Aleppo. Those bombardments are ruthlessly destroying hospitals and killing civilians. The situation is devastating. It is deeply regrettable that the Security Council has failed, thus far, to overcome its differences. All military activities in eastern Aleppo must be halted immediately, particularly the indiscriminate attacks which are violating international humanitarian law.

Today's failure to adopt a draft resolution that would have improved the humanitarian situation in Aleppo is yet another unfortunate example of the Security Council not being able to take effective measures on a matter of great urgency. That should not be an excuse for inaction in the crisis in Aleppo. There are pressing humanitarian needs on the ground. We must undertake measures to enable immediate medical evacuation as well as the movement of humanitarian supplies from western Aleppo. The Council has a responsibility to take concrete actions to bring about actual changes on the ground. The Syrian people have already suffered far too long.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): With the firm commitment to fully respecting international humanitarian law, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela condemns indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population and humanitarian personnel carried out by any party. It also condemns air strikes carried out against hospitals and health facilities, just

as we have denounced them in the Gaza strip, in the occupied territories of the State of Palestine, in Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan and Syria. Nevertheless, our country voted against the draft resolution on the situation in eastern Aleppo because the it does not adequately address the humanitarian problem that is severely impacting the civilian population in that province, due to the terrorist barbarism of Jabhat al-Nusrah and its related groups, and the terrible logic of war in the country.

We are concerned that although the humanitarian situation calls for concrete responses based on the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-politicization, in this case the noble humanitarian aim has been distorted in favour of the political interests of some of the members of the Security Council to the detriment of the Syrian people. Specifically, the humanitarian tragedy of the people in eastern Aleppo is being used in an attempt to blame Syria and Russia for exacerbating the humanitarian situation in the zone, where in truth those directly responsible for that tragedy are the terrorist groups with foreign backing that have been committing heinous crimes against the people of Syria for five years now, in their desire and purpose of overthrowing a legitimate Government.

We cannot ignore the fact that there are other interested parties to the conflict within the Security Council. Therefore, in that regard, we members of the Council have a shared but differentiated responsibility. Those players have been direct participants in the armed conflict since its inception, providing weapons to violent non-State actors who then became terrorist groups that are no longer under their control. They now claim not to understand the consequences of their own actions and employ dramatic rhetoric while continuing to fuel a war, not only in Syri, but throughout the Middle East.

We believe that, had there been genuine interest in producing a consensus document, the Council would have been in possession of a draft resolution that reflected its unity. Regrettably, the political agendas of some of the members of the Council took precedence, which prevented a positive outcome — to the detriment of the people in Aleppo. The obstinate insistence on pushing this draft resolution (S/2016/846) in the Council while knowing that it was not viable has deepened divisions within this collegial organ. We now run the risk of undermining the progress that has been made, in particular by the co-Chairs of the International Syria Support Group — the Russian Federation and the United States — as well as the efforts of Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura.

The fight against terrorism being conducted jointly by the Governments of Syria and Russia cannot be viewed as an excuse for destroying the Syrian population in Aleppo, as some are attempting to encourage without good basis. A genuine threat exists in that region and is reflected by the thousands of fighters of the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist groups that are holding hostage the thousands of civilians living there and using them as human shields — all in breach of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We need only recall that the Government of Syria opened up humanitarian corridors to evacuate the city of Aleppo, while the terrorist groups executed those who attempted to leave the city.

Given the fight against terrorism is a goal shared by the international community, as stated in various Security Council resolutions, we do not understand how the so-called moderate opposition has not disassociated itself once and for all from the Al-Nusra Front. If its intentions for peace and stability in Syria are indeed sincere, the moderate opposition should join in the efforts to eliminate the scourge of terrorism and take part fully in the peace talks without any preconditions. What is urgent is to stop outside support to armed groups — which evolve into terrorist groups — and to implement the cessation of hostilities agreed upon on 9 September.

In addition, it is paradoxical that today's draft resolution demands that Syria curtail its legitimate right to exercise full sovereignty over its territory, in particular its airspace by ceasing all military flights over Aleppo. That demand stands in contrast to the flexibility — or the failure — of the Council in other conflicts, such as in the Gaza Strip, Fallujah, Baghdad, Yemen or Afghanistan. We insist that issues brought before the Council should not be addressed with double standards. We believe that Syria's full exercise of its sovereignty, by way of controlling its territory, is a guarantee for an effective fight against the scourge of terrorism in that country. We wonder how Syria could be asked to limit its sovereignty when sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence are all enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations as being key to international peace and security.

The Council does not have the right to violate the sovereignty of Member States, and it cannot decide whether or not a Government is legitimate. That is solely up to peoples. We cannot allow the disastrous military acts of aggression that occurred in Iraq, Libya and other places to reoccur. Those events inflicted a great deal of suffering on the people of those countries by creating fertile ground for Al-Qaida to expand and Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to emerge, following the dismantling of their institutional and political structures.

In conclusion, we reject the fact that the human tragedy being experienced the Syrian people is being manipulated by a war imposed from abroad and financed and sustained by foreign players and fighters. In spite of the media pressure and manipulation, in order to address the issue without double standards, uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and work towards a political, negotiated solution to such a terrible conflict, we will resolutely continue working towards peace.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/847, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:
China, Egypt, Russian Federation, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Against:
France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:
Angola, Uruguay

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There were 4 votes in favour, 9 against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I find myself at a loss for words to express our deep sorrow at the scene we are witnessing today — the military escalation that compelled the Security Council to convene before the entire world in order to convey a message of failure to the Syrian people. Regrettably, the Council, which was created in the previous century to peaceably settle disputes, is gradually becoming a mere media platform. Instead of holding serious political consultations, in open and closed meetings, to stop the Syrian bloodletting, consultations have amounted to no more than a repetition of traditional positions and dialogue that falls on deaf ears.

We used to prepare our statements and deliver them in the Chamber to express condemnation and denunciation, or to share new information to apprise ourselves of what happened and what is happening in Syria. We have forgotten that the impact of our statements hardly goes beyond this building or the mass media, whereas the tragedy of the bereaved Syrian people continues, with half of the Syrian population displaced and hundreds of thousands of its men, women and children killed. Allow me to express my sorrow and sympathy to any Syrian citizen who is following today's meeting, although I wonder if there is anyone in Syria who is genuinely interested in following this meeting.

Egypt voted in favour of the two draft resolutions (S/2016/846 and S/2016/847) that were put forward for voting today, which focused on a de-escalation of the situation in Syria, in particular in Aleppo. Regrettably, although we had already known that the two draft resolutions would fail, our voting simply served to express our position. Egypt can no longer tolerate the fact that the fate of the region's people is being manipulated. Today, we are simply conveying a message on the part of the biggest Arab population to the international, regional and internal Powers in Syria to end the tragedy — and end the political rivalries, ambitions and disputes, which are claiming Syrian lives — in that country.

It is not my wish to conclude my statement by expressing regret, because we still have a window of opportunity to address the Syrian crisis in earnest. If all the members of the Council were to express and confirm their desire to end the bloodshed, we would seriously consider all the various approaches contained in the two draft resolutions proposed today. Let us agree that the two draft resolutions covered key points

that should serve as a foundation for us to build upon in the coming days. We voted in favour of the following five points today.

First, it is imperative to stop the targeting of Syrian civilians and infrastructure and allow unhindered access to humanitarian aid in conjunction with the United Nations. Secondly, we must work towards implementing a cessation of hostilities in Syria that would pave the way for a full ceasefire, prioritizing Aleppo in line with resolution 2268 (2016), in tandem with enhancing the supervision and monitoring mechanisms. Thirdly, it is very important to confront certain armed groups that disregard of the will and volition of the international community, the ambitions of the Syrian people for a change towards a better future, and their determination and persistence in cooperating with terrorist groups, especially Jabhat al-Nusrah Jabhat Fatih al-Sham. Fourthly, the Security Council should shoulder its responsibility and the International Syria Support Group and its co-chairmansip must play its pivotal role in carrying out the realization of the aforementioned points. Fifthly, earnest negotiations must be launched among the Syrian parties with regard to the transitional phase stipulated in the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex) and resolution 2254 (2015).

Egypt is fully prepared to work within the framework of the International Syria Support Group and the Security Council, — whether it be with the permanent or non-permanent members of the Council — to carry out and achieve the efforts to which I referred earlier.

To conclude, let me call upon members of the Security Council to work towards restoring the Council's role and facilitating open and serious discussion in ending the Syrian tragedy.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): The lonely veto and four votes in favour of your draft resolution, Sir, were a double humiliation. This text was a cynical attempt to divert attention from Russia's exercise of the veto today that once again denied any hope to the people of Aleppo. It failed because it failed to demand an immediate end to the aerial bombardment of Aleppo. It is a sham, just as Russia's hollow commitment to a political process in Syria is a sham. The indiscriminate bombing of civilians in Aleppo is sickening and barbaric. Please stop now.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): This text was a deceptive attempt to get the Security Council to ratify what Russia and the regime are doing in Aleppo, as they will undoubtedly claim that any and all of the devastation that they are raining down is directed at terrorists, not the innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure that they are very clearly striking. But I will not belabour this point. What Russia wants is for there to be more talk while they seek to take the city by brutal force. What we want is less talk and more action for them to stop the slaughter.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Unfortunately, today the Security Council has effectively shown its inability to achieve consensus on how to manage and resolve the horrible tragedy faced by the people of Syria since the beginning of the war. The fundamental reason for the lack of unity is based on the fact that certain permanent members of the Security Council are deeply involved in the conflict and supported the development of this type of asymmetric war, a new and absolutely illegal mechanism designed to overthrow Governments.

We entirely subscribe to the statement made by the representative of Egypt because, unfortunately, hundreds of thousands of Syrian people are dying on the ground and are paying the price for a disastrous policy in the Middle East. In our view, this is a warning to the non-permanent member of the Security Council, and we must thoroughly consider that we are encouraging conflicts by taking steps that are in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and everything represented by the international legal system.

We are a sovereign country, but we have no military or geopolitical interests beyond our borders. We see the need to raise our voice to ensure that the international community will defend those principles underlying the United Nations, including respect for sovereignty and the non-interference in the internal affairs of people and the concept that sovereignty lies in the people of any given country. Those are fundamental principles. No one in the Security Council can decide whether the Government of Syria is legitimate. No one in the Security Council has the right to suppress the sovereignty of the Syrian Government over its own territory.

We have already had painful experiences that need to be analysed and discussed in depth in assessing the question of whether the Security Council is fulfilling the role that it was given when the United Nations was founded. We see ourselves in the middle of a conflict between powerful countries, and we need to defend such

principles. Much pressure is being generated to ensure that brotherly countries, particularly non-permanent members, align themselves with one position or another. We appeal to everyone to respect the principles as the only means to come up with a political solution not only to the Syrian conflict, but also to the conflicts in Yemen and Palestine, among so many other countries.

The exercise of the right of veto by Russia was criticized. We believe that the right of veto serves in many instances to establish balance in situations that are otherwise totally out of balance. If only they could have exercised the right of veto in connection with the intervention in Iraq or the NATO bombings in Libya, we would not be facing the regrettable situation in which we find ourselves today. Double standards are often used in addressing a situation. Some Council members that are directly involved in the conflict tell dramatic accounts of human suffering, which are of course deeply regrettable, yet they remain in inexplicable and complicit silence when faced, for example, with the suffering of the Palestinian people during the terrible Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, or remain inexplicably silent on the matter of other conflicts, such as the situation in Yemen.

We voted in favour of the second draft resolution (S/2016/847) proposed by the Russian Federation because we believe that, like the draft resolution proposed by New Zealand, it contained elements that could have led the Council to unite regarding the need to end civilian suffering in eastern Aleppo and throughout Syria.

I believe that once the Council has publicly demonstrated its lack of unity in that regard, it should work constructively, beyond its members' own national agendas, to find a political and negotiated solution to the tragedy. The massacres in Syria must end. State interventionism in Syria must end. The delivery of weapons to groups that are not able to disassociate themselves from terrorist groups must end. The United Nations and the Security Council must arrive at a negotiated solution to the conflict or, as already has been said, the phenomenon of terrorism will continue to bring suffering to the people of the Middle East.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Ukraine voted against draft resolution S/2016/847, proposed by the Russian Federation, for the following reasons. We simply do not agree with tactics that aim to divert attention from the solid and meaningful draft resolution S/2016/846, which could have affected the situation on the ground and help put an end to the massacre in Aleppo. The draft resolution proposed by Russia barely mentions the devastating developments in Aleppo, which is cynical, given the gravity of the situation in that symbolic Syrian city. We also strongly condemn the attempt to put a draft resolution to the vote that has never been discussed in the Council.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has followed the escalation of the conflict in several regions of Syria and is deeply moved by the wartime suffering of the Syrian people. China strongly condemns all terrorist activities that harm and kill innocent people.

In that regard, the international community should continue to work towards and push for a political solution to the dispute through dialogue between all parties involved in the conflict, so as to stop the fighting as soon as possible. Actions taken by the Security Council concerning the situation in Syria should be able to concretely improve the situation, help push for a cessation of hostilities, support and coordinate United Nations efforts for humanitarian assistance and facilitate stronger efforts to combat terrorist groups designated by the Security Council, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Such action should promote the search for a solution that is acceptable to all parties in a political process owned and led by the Syrians under the auspices of the United Nations.

The draft resolution submitted by France and Spain (S/2016/846) contains a number of important elements, such as the need for a ceasefire, a call for a political solution, improvement of the humanitarian situation, and enhanced efforts to combat terrorism. However, some of the draft resolution's provisions do not fully respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria. Moreover, the constructive views of some Security Council members were not incorporated. For those reasons, China had to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

The draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation to the Security Council (S/2016/847) urges the parties to immediately cease hostilities, enable access to humanitarian aid, enhance efforts to combat terrorism, and support the good offices of Special Envoy Staffan De Mistura, and calls for an early resumption of peace talks in Geneva. The draft resolution reflects a four-track strategy comprised of a ceasefire, humanitarian assistance, joint efforts in

combating terrorism and political negotiations. It also reflects respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, with complete, comprehensive and balanced content. China voted in favour of the draft resolution and regrets that it was not adopted.

Syria is an important country in the Middle East. An immediate restoration of peace and stability is in the common interests of Syria, other countries of the region and the international community. China hopes that the Security Council will maintain the safety of the Syrian people as its first priority and remain united in order to reach consensus, pursue its efforts to push for a political solution to the conflict in Syria, work jointly to prevent the further breeding and spread of terrorism and play a positive and constructive role in maintaining peace and stability in Syria and the region.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): New Zealand voted against the draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation (S/2016/847) due to its partial and misleading nature and Russia's destructive role in the Syrian conflict and because Russia provided no scope for any negotiation on a text on such a sensitive issue — an issue to which Russia is a direct party.

Action of this kind only serves to deepen the divides in the Council that are preventing constructive action from being taken. As you earlier observed, Mr. President, New Zealand has been working on some ideas to try and bring the Council together on this most difficult issue. That we have not yet put our ideas forward has been our decision and ours alone, but I invite Russia and all Council members to work with us in the coming days to see if we can chart a course in a more positive direction.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): In this very Chamber, we have already said that we are pained by the situations in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan and in all other parts of the world where the civilian population is subject to the brutalities of war. We have also said in this very Chamber that, as we give speeches, we are pained by the fact that bombs continue to fall on the civilian population, hospitals and schools. In this very Chamber, we have also said that what is happening in Aleppo is, without any doubt, a true massacre.

Today, an end to hostilities, bombings and carnage are of the utmost importance. Allow me to add that the babies being pulled from the rubble in Aleppo are not terrorists; the old people crushed in the debris of their homes are not terrorists; the patients buried in the rubble of hospitals in Aleppo are not terrorists; and the children buried in the remains of their schools are not terrorists.

Regarding the draft resolution in document S/2016/847, my delegation abstained for reasons of procedure and of substance. Regarding procedure, the draft resolution was presented yesterday at 5 p.m. as a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. There was no possibility of negotiation. Moreover, after briefly reading through it, we noted that it included a bilateral agreement on which the Security Council had no say or any reason for being aware of it. We all know that there is a strong discrepancy between those members who would sign the agreement and those who would not, and it is not up to the Security Council to mediate in that regard.

Regarding substance, the draft resolution does not address something that is vital at the present stage, namely, putting an end to the bombing in Aleppo. My delegation is committed and will continue to work in the Security Council to relaunch a process of negotiation that will contribute to ending the current situation and channeling Syria towards a better future.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): Members of the Security Council were confronted today with a peculiar situation. They had to cast two consecutive votes on two draft resolutions on the same issue — the cessation of hostilities in Syria.

First and foremost, we would like to state our deep distress about the current humanitarian situation in Aleppo, which has left the vast majority of the city's population without access to basic necessities and life-saving assistance, while the horrific bloodshed, particularly in eastern Aleppo, has caused far too many deaths and injuries among the civilian population.

In Aleppo, we are witnessing destruction of truly historical proportions to which we in the Council can put a stop if we act constructively and decisively. The bombing of hospitals is unacceptable and we strongly condemn such actions. However, the regional and international stakeholders that have directly involved themselves in the conflict by supplying weapons and logistic support to belligerents guilty of grave human rights violations, bear the greatest responsibility for resolving this grave issue. We expect the permanent members of the Council, whose special responsibility lies in the maintenance of peace and security, to set the example by putting aside strategic interests and

mobilizing all possible political action for the sake of the Syrian civilians whom we are called upon to protect.

Even though the brave and dedicated Members of the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies continue to operate in Syria, the reality is that the latest wave of fighting in Aleppo has caused the destruction of essential infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals and ambulances, and depleted the ranks of medical staff able to provide much-needed care and assistance. The numbers of casualties, wounded and displaced are absolutely overwhelming.

We have voted here today on two draft resolutions that, in our opinion, contain constructive proposals. We find the inability to make progress on a single resolution addressing the most pressing concerns — the protection of civilians, the cessation of hostilities and the establishment of a political process conducive to lasting peace in Syria — to be most unfortunate.

Angola abstained in the voting on the two resolutions. The draft resolution submitted by France and Spain (S/2016/846), in our view, does not address the fundamental issue of reviving the process conducive to a meaningful cessation of hostilities. On the contrary, it seeks to feed the acrimonious and dangerous debate among the main players in the conflict, permanent members of the Security Council and it most probably will represent the burial of the International Syrian Support Group (ISSG).

While the Russian proposal (S/2016/847) contains some positive elements with a view to relaunching a process conducive to the cessation of hostilities, Angola decided to abstain in the voting in order to avoid being dragged into the unfortunate prevailing acrimony among the members of the Council that bear the main responsibility for the conflict and the duty to find solutions to it.

I support Special Envoy De Mistura's efforts and his permanent commitment to relaunching an agreement on the cessation of hostilities, guaranteeing safe and unrestricted humanitarian access, resuming the repairs of Aleppo's damaged water and power facilities and allowing medical evacuation for urgent cases in and around the city. Surely that effort depends on the cooperation between the Russian Federation and the United States of America. We deeply regret the suspension of bilateral discussions on the cessation of hostilities between the co-Chairs of the ISSG Ceasefire Task Force. We sincerely hope that the respective Governments will be able to agree on the importance of maintaining open lines of dialogue and renewing cooperation in the search for peace and the fight against terrorism, and easing the plight of the Syrian civilians who bear the heaviest burden of the conflict.

In conclusion, after the show of unity of the Security Council on the recommendation for the next Secretary-General, today's events are a very negative signal regarding the Council's ability to contribute meaningfully to international peace and security, which we deeply regret. Angola reiterates its determination to remain engaged in the search for peace and to save lives in Syria by advancing the political process through negotiations and dialogue involving, above all, Syrians.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): We voted against the proposal submitted by the Russian Federation (S/2016/847). I repeat what I said earlier today. All aerial bombardments of Aleppo must be ended immediately. All military activities in eastern Aleppo, particularly the indiscriminate attacks that violate international humanitarian law must be halted immediately. Had the agreement of 9 September between the United States of America and Russia been in effect, we may have been able to implement measures based on that. Sadly, that is not the case. Japan cannot support the Russian proposal.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now say a few words in my national capacity. I will be very brief because we are still going to be hearing from another speaker.

The representatives of the United States of America and the United Kingdom, as usual, stuck to their provocative rhetoric. We are used to that free-flowing discourse and shall not react to it. Attempts to insult us do not upset or distract us from what is most important. But I do have two topics I would like to touch on.

The representative of the United Kingdom made an emotional appeal for putting an end to this immediately. Indeed, how about it? How about immediately putting an end to supporting various thugs around the world — terrorists, extremists and all the other amateurs exacerbating the situation in one country or another? How about putting an end to interfering in the affairs of other sovereign States? Just give up these colonial customs and leave the world in peace. The situation would improve in a great many parts of the world.

The argument made by the United States is that more action is needed. We completely agree. It took

our Minister for Foreign Affairs and the United States Secretary of State several months to work out an agreement, but the United States could not implement it or manage to separate the moderate opposition from terrorists. It could not even ensure the withdrawal of opposition groups from the Castello road so as to provide better conditions to get humanitarian aid to eastern Aleppo. Yes, more action is needed.

I think the representative of Uruguay made an important point about the fact that it is the terrorists are to blame while it is the civilians who are suffering. I would take that argument further — it is the politicians who are to blame, as they try to realize their grandiose plans all over the world while civilians suffer. And they do not even try to admit to the catastrophic mistakes, if not crimes, that result from their policies, fanning the flames of conflict and fomenting chaos in many parts of the world.

Finally, the representative of Angola expressed alarm that what is going on could mean the collapse of the International Syria Support Group. We do not agree. We believe we will be able to preserve both the multilateral formats and today's draft resolution (S/2016/847), which, as I said, we did not expect to be adopted and viewed it merely as a political demonstration. It was aimed at preserving those multilateral formats and hence what was valuable in the Russian-American agreements. While they have not been implemented, we think they can be. I would like to assure the Council that some very complex work is continuing, both multilaterally and bilaterally, and we all hope fervently that the situation in Syria can be normalized, which would undoubtedly improve the situation in eastern Aleppo. We hope that will happen as soon as possible.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Clearly, the truth unnerves the representatives of colonial Powers in the Chamber. We have seem them leave when they hear the truth being spoken. By such actions, they prove that they have malicious colonial intentions against my country and the people of Syria. Similarly, they demonstrate that their diplomacy is a diplomacy of chaos, coercion and the use of force, and it is not based on the principles of dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution. To those colleagues who walked out of the Chamber while we were still in session (see S/PV.7777), I would like to thank them because they gave me the status of permanent member instead of them.

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on presiding over the work of the Council this month — at a time when the whole world, and our region in particular, are experiencing major, serious challenges. Such difficult challenges come as a result of the erroneous policies of some States, including permanent members of the Security Council. They are seeking to implement their own interventionist policies, which contravene the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. However, your experience and wisdom, Sir, serve to provide leadership for the work of the Council at this critical time.

Allow me to take this opportunity to condemn the cowardly act of terrorism perpetrated by the Al-Nusra Front against the Russian Embassy in Damascus a few days ago. Several Member States voted positively for the French draft resolution (S/2016/846), but they opposed releasing even a press statement condemning that attack. We are also sorry that the Council failed to adopt the draft resolution (S/2016/847) submitted with a view to achieving peace and expediting the political process in Syria by differentiating between the so-called armed opposition forces and the terrorist Al-Nusra Front. Blocking the Russian draft resolution serves to reaffirm, for the hundredth time, the lack of political will on the part of those who oposed it. They have no real political will to combat terrorism and no genuine will to reach an inter-Syrian resolution to the crisis. Clearly, differentiating between extremist terrorists and the moderate armed groups is a difficult process, akin to trying to separate enriched uranium from unenriched uranium, if there were such a thing as unenriched uranium.

I have not bothered to reflect on the French draft resolution, as it was crystal clear that it had its own objectives — clear not just to me, but to the Syrian people too. It makes me recall the one-hundredth anniversary of the infamous Sykes-Picot Agreement, a colonial agreement between France and Britain that brought continuous suffering to our people, created divides in our society and looted our wealth and resources. We think that the French draft resolution reflects the nostalgia France feels for its dark colonial past. It was under the illusion that fuelling the Syrian

crisis would create a golden opportunity for it to revive its former colonial power, which will not return.

Today, the Foreign Minister of France attempted to be the Syrian people's guardian when he spoke about what was good for them and what he, in his capacity as Foreign Minister, should do to help them — as though he were still dreaming that he represented a colonial Power that could hijack the right to speak on behalf of the Syrian people in the Council. However, French politicians should be ashamed of what they have done to Libya and to the Libyan people. And when turning our attention to the Guernica and Srebrenica massacres, we see that such massacres were the result of European competitive barbaric policies to which we, nor anyone else, bears any relation. Such policies were purely European barbaric policies.

As for the carnage in Syria today, it has been caused by mercenary foreign terrorists whoe were born in France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain and Belgium. These are terrorists who are manipulated by the intelligence agencies of Western States, the fatwas on jihad, financing from Qatar and Saudi Arabia and Turkish sponsorship for all these acts of aggression. Before I proceed with my statement, I would like to remind the French Minister of what his predecessor once said:

(*spoke in French*)

"The French jihadists are doing a good job in Syria".

(*spoke in Arabic*)

This is the policy of France, as expressed by the Foreign Minister of France at the time, Laurent Fabius, in 2012.

Elements and provisions of the French draft resolution prove yet again that they have malicious intentions towards my country. From the very beginning, successive French Governments have sought to undermine the Syrian State in its totality, not simply targeting a particular Government. The draft resolution clearly calls for an end to the operations conducted by the Syrian Army and its allies to defend the Syrian people and combat terrorism, on behalf of all the members of the Security Council, from the Al-Nusra Front, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and affiliated terrorist groups. It seems that whenever the Syrian Army and its allies gain ground against the terrorist groups — namely, the Al-Nusra Front — well-known members of the Council rush to rescue them from their inevitable defeat by convening meetings or putting forth draft resolutions that completely disregard the suffering of the Syrian people. They seek only to rescue the terrorists, whether in Aleppo or in other cities and regions of Syria.

We had hoped that this unprecedented and tireless effort by France to push for the adoption of its resolution — similarly with the draft resolution by Russia — would have been geared towards finding a political solution to the crisis in Syria, led by Syrians without any foreign intervention or preconditions. We had hoped that, instead of submitting a draft resolution to impose a no-fly zone in our own air space, France and its allies would have imposed a moratorium on the support provided by their Governments to terrorism, which they then export to Syria. We had hoped that the Government of France would be able to answer the question that the Syrian people continue to ask, that is, whether the money from the Total oil deal, the Qatari gas deal and the Saudi Arabia arms deals were worth the Syrian blood spilled?

For more than six years, the United States, France and Britain have persistently called for one meeting after another. They have sponsored draft resolutions, presidential statements and press statements in the Council with one purpose, namely, to deceive the public into believing that they are seeking to resolve the crisis in my country. Meanwhile, they have launched media, diplomatic and political campaigns to falsely promote certain ideas, including that the situation taking place in Syria is a confrontation between the so-called moderate armed opposition and Government forces, which they accuse of committing war crimes. They completely disregard the fact that their policies have jeopardized the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians in Syria due to their continued support for the armed terrorist groups that have used civilians as human shields.

In response to remarks by some colleagues who talked about targeting hospitals, the fact is that in eastern Aleppo terrorists have turned the largest and most important eye hospital in the Middle East into a base for their military operations.

I would like to remind members that, since the beginning of the crisis in Syria, the Security Council has held 75 official formal meetings, 97 consultations and 8 Arria Formula meetings. It has also adopted 17 resolutions, in addition to releasing a number of presidential and press statements, on the situation in

Syria. However, those efforts have not prevented the world terrorist diaspora from destroying my country, Syria. I would like to remind the Council that the United States has used its veto 77 times, Britain 33 times and France 19 times. The representatives of those countries have no shame. When they block draft resolutions, they simply call for an end to the Israeli occupation of our lands and justice for the Palestinian people.

It is self-evident that the support programmes provided to "moderate armed groups" by the United States, as well as by some regional and Arab countries following the paymasters of the region, continue to reach the hands of ISIL and the Al-Nusra Front. These groups, along with their affiliates, are terrorist groups. The Syrian people have rights, and these countries are claiming that they seek to achieve their interests. They should consider the logic and the mechanisms that govern their approach towards Syria. The United States has estbalished a programme to train fighters that it has pre-determined as moderate: according to officials, the United States has spent $500 million to train 49 fighters. Forty-four of them took weapons provided by the United States and, as soon as they reached Syrian terrority, joined the terrorist Al-Nusra Front. That leaves five, and we have no idea where they are now.

The United States, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have provided arms and money to the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade in the southern region of Syria and the occupied Golan Heights. This Brigade has announced its allegiance to ISIL. Those countries have insisted that Harakat Nur al-Din al-Zanki was moderate, despite it being a terrorist organization supported by Turkey and its claiming of responsibility for its crimes in Aleppo. They have in fact now officially joined the Al-Nusra Front. Therefore, all of those "moderate" armed groups are now affiliated with ISIL. The most recent incident involves the Suqour Jabal al-Zawiya Brigade, which, supported by the United States, has announced its allegiance to the Fateh al-Sham Army — the new name of the terrorist group Al-Nusra Front.

I would like here to mention 1,800 electronic messages that were deleted from the inbox of the former United States Secretary of State. Those messages included details on consignments of weapons that were transferred to armed terrorist groups in Syria from Libya through Turkey, by decision of the American Administration.

In implementing such destructive policies, these countries have relied on a misleading political media campaign to convince global public opinion that they are fighting terrorism and that the terrorists that they fund, support, harbour and transfer into Syria from more than 100 States are either "moderate" opposition or "first responders". Recently, the term "White Helmets" has been used to refer to them, and they have even been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. I have with me pictures that show these "moderate" members of the opposition — the White Helmets — with one of them firing an rocket-propelled grenad at aeroplanes. By the way, he is a physician. We have dozens of similar pictures, if any Council members would like to take a look. I would also like to point out that the founder of these malicious White Helmets is in fact James Le Mesurier, an intelligence officer from Britain.

As the United States-based Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity recently reported, the Pentagon paid $540 million to the British public relations firm Bell Pottinger, which typically renders services to Chile and Saudi Arabia, to develop an aggressive propaganda campaign against the Syrian Government. The firm fabricates YouTube videos, photos, video clips and so on.

The United States of America formed an international coalition under the pretext of fighting ISIL and other terrorist organizations, including organizations for which they have, since 2003, provided fertile ground for them to spread. However, the facts on the ground have proved that, since the establishment of the so-called coalition, ISIL has expanded and gained more ground, because that coalition has not been seriously combating terrorism — to the contrary. The coalition air forces have been responsible for killing hundreds of Syrian military personnel and civilians, destroying infrastructure and economic installations and providing air drops with weapons and military supplies to terrorist organizations to spread still more chaos and wreak havoc in my country. However, according to the coalition, all that was simply a mistake. Therefore, the coalition air forces have killed civilians, destroyed infrastructure, aided and armed terrorists and then justified those crimes by calling them simply mistakes that need to be forgiven. Days later they repeat those same mistakes.

Honestly, one now needs to decipher the actual strategy of the United States-led coalition based on a code based of repeated mistakes. Those offences

appear to be governed by a systematic, intentional policy, as was the case when their aeroplanes targeted the positions of the Syrian Army in Deir ez-Zor. That attack actually exposed dozens of civilians to the ISIL threat. They even had the audacity to request that safe humanitarian corridors be opened for the terrorists to maintain their dignity. Did the United States, Britain and France open safe humanitarian corridors to protect the "moderate" terrorists of Al-Qaida in Afghanistan, or for those who committed the massacres at *Charlie Hebdo* or the Bataclan Theatre — or in Nice, California, Boston, Chicago, New York or London? Why have they failed to open such humanitarian corridors in Europe and the United States for terrorists to escape?

The United States representative said, "we must learn from the lessons of the past". I would like to tell him: I hope that the United States can do that. I hope that the United States could learn from their mistakes in Viet Nam, Cambodia, Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya and Africa. I hope that he would recall and apologize for what they did to innocent Iraqis — the 408 civilians they killed on 13 February 1991 in the Amiriyah shelter in Baghdad.

My Government reaffirms that it will continue to cooperate with the United Nations and its specialized agencies to implement the monthly humanitarian response plan. We have approved the October response plan and wish to note that the failure to fully implement it is because of the practices of armed terrorist groups and their allies that continue to obstruct humanitarian access. Those groups continue to target convoys and humanitarian workers and to loot the assistance provisions. The most recent attack targeted the humanitarian assistance convoy headed to Oram Al-Kubra, in rural Aleppo, on 19 September, which led to the deaths of a number of Syrian citizens and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). They looted supplies and burned the trucks. The "moderate" armed groups have denied access to SARC staff to deliver assistance to a number of areas. Those are facts of which United Nations agency workers in Syria are well aware. We have initiated an investigation into the attack against the United Nations-SARC convoy in Oram Al-Kubra and will provide the Council with the results of the investigation when it is concluded.

The fact that we are sitting in the Chamber today at this meeting to consider the situation in eastern Aleppo as some shed crocodile tears is a direct result of the United States shirking its agreement reached with the Russian Federation on 9 September. That agreement was supposed to differentiate between the moderate armed groups and the Al-Nusra Front. The Syrian Arab Government has been committed to the cessation of hostilities agreement and has taken action to implement its provisions and to deliver assistance in Aleppo. However, the fact is that the United States has not been honouring its obligations. Terrorist groups, supported by the United States and its allies, continue to violate the agreement and are regrouping to launch new attacks, all of which has led to the end the cessation of hostilities agreement and to the continuing deterioration of the situation in Aleppo after the terrorists killed 157 Syrian soldiers and 300 civilians in eastern Aleppo.

In conclusion, the blood being spilled in our country is our blood. We are the victims of a terrorist war and its pain, anguish and torment. It is ours and no one else's. It is the height of hypocrisy and falsification of evidence that those sponsors of terrorism actually shed crocodile tears on this humanitarian crisis. We will continue to fight terrorism, and that continues on a parallel track with the commitment to reach a political solution through intra-Syrian dialogue wherein Syrians and no one else decides on the future of Syria, with no foreign intervention.

In addition, I wish to call upon those who have shed crocodile tears for the Syrian people and to advise them to shed genuine tears for the 250 Yemenis killed today by Western air forces — with Western aeroplanes used by the Saudis.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of New Zealand has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I am used to the fantastical reveries of the Syrian representative. Very little of what he says can be relied upon as accurate. But when he tells blatant lies about the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Syrian people, I must speak up. The record is clear. The delays in the delivery of humanitarian aid, the removal of medical equipment and the other obstructions that are put in the way of United Nations convoys — all the responsibility lies very much with the Syrian regime.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I did not want to respond to my colleague, because I am in constant contact with him and I always try to explain to him what is going on in my country regarding the humanitarian crisis we are facing. However, I did not expect him make the mistake of calling me the representative of a regime, especially as he is an experienced diplomat and a member of the Council. He is supposed to respect international legitimacy and he should address me as the representative of my country, the Syrian Arab Republic. That is the first mistake.

The second mistake is that it seems that the Permanent Representative of New Zealand and other colleagues do not read what we send to them. We have addressed a compendium of 500 letters to the Council on behalf of the Government of Syria concerning international terrorism sponsored by countries known to all. We have been sending such letters since the beginning of the crisis. It would seem that my colleague, the Permanent Representative of New Zealand, has not read them. We have sent 60 letters, addressed to the Permanent Representative of New Zealand among others, on the use of chemical weapons by terrorists in Syria. It appears that some Council members do not read what we send them. I would therefore urge my colleagues to read these letters, which would definitely help them to see the situation clearly.

We in Syria have fallen victim to the misunderstandings of some and the misleading lies of others. We, as diplomats, have the responsibility to correct such misunderstandings. We should not lie to one another.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.